

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USUN NEW YORK 839

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 3120

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, CE, IZ

SUBJ: VISIT TO SRI LANKA OF IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT TAHA
MUHIDDIN MAROUF

1. IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT MAROUF, ACCOMPANIED BY THE FOREIGN
MINISTER AND ELEVEN OTHERS, VISITED SRI LANKA JULY 3-5.
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) OFFICIAL DESCRIBED VISIT
AS FIRST BY HIGH LEVEL IRAQI AND PRIMARY PURPOSE AS ESSEN-
Tially GOODWILL. MAROUF WAS GIVEN RED CARPET RECEPTION AND
VISIT RECEIVED MODERATE PRESS PLAY. EGYPTIANS WERE NOTABLY
ABSENT FROM DIPLOMATIC RECEIVING LINES.

2. MAROUF MET WITH PRESIDENT J.R. JAYEWARDENE, PRIME MINISTER
R. PREMADASA, FOREIGN MINISTER A.C.S. HAMEED, AND SENIOR MFA
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OFFICERS. DISCUSSIONS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS CENTERED ON WAYS
TO INCREASE CONTACTS AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO
COUNTRIES. THESE DISCUSSIONS WERE CHARACTERIZED BY MFA OFFICIAL
AS INSIGNIFICANT. NO AGREEMENTS WERE REACHED.

3. IN VARIOUS MEETINGS, PARTICIPANTS DISCUSSED FOLLOWING
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES:

A. NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT: BOTH SIDES ASSERTED THE VALIDITY OF NAM AND AGREED TO SEEK WAYS TO STRENGTHEN ITS UNITY AND SOLIDARITY. THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE TENDENCY OF SOME MEMBERS TO AIR DISPUTES PUBLICLY AND TO TAKE UP ARMS THEREBY INVITING THIRD COUNTRY INTERVENTION. THEY AGREED TO WORK TOGETHER WITH OTHERS TO SEEK WAYS AND MEANS TO SOLVE NAM PROBLEMS AND TO WORK TO MAKE BELGRADE AND HAVANA MEETINGS SUCCESSES.

B. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION - THEY STRESSED NECESSITY FOR ESTABLISHING NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER AND URGED DEVELOPING NATIONS TO TREAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH EQUALITY AND JUSTICE IN ECONOMIC RELATIONS.

C. MIDDLE EAST - AGREED THAT ME SITUATION IS STILL EXPLOSIVE, BLAMING IT ON ISRAEL'S AGGRESSIVE AND EXPANSIONIST POLICIES. SOLUTION OF ME PROBLEM LIES IN ENSURING LIBERATION OF ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES AND RESITUATION OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE'S RIGHTS.

D. INDIAN OCEAN - CALLED FOR ZONE OF PEACE FREE FROM FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO ENSURE INTERESTS OF ALL LITTORAL STATES.

4. EGYPTIAN EMBASSY OFFICER SUPPORTED MFA CONTENTION THAT MAROUF'S VISIT WAS FOR GOODWILL. WITH INDIA ON HIS ITINERARY, MAROUF COULD NOT HAVE IGNORED SRI LANKA WITHOUT PUTTING SRI LANKAN NOSES OUT OF JOINT. BOTH SRI LANKAN AND EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS BELIEVE IRAQ IS ATTEMPTING TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF REASONABLENESS. IRAQIS EXPRESSED CONCERNS ABOUT CONFIDENTIAL

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CUBA'S ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA AND INDICATED THEY WANT TO CO-OPERATE AT BELGRADE MEETING TO MODERATE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN NAM THROUGH CUBA.

5. EGYPTIANS SAID IT HAD BEEN AGREED IN PRINCIPLE THAT IRAQ WILL BE THE NAM CHAIRMAN AFTER CUBA. FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE AT HAVANA SUMMIT. SRI LANKANS AND EGYPTIANS HERE AGREE THAT THIS IS FACTOR IN IRAQ'S CAMPAIGN. MOREOVER, EGYPTIAN SAID THAT UNLESS SITUATION CHANGES DRAMATICALLY, PRESIDENT SADAT AND SEVERAL OTHER HEADS OF STATE WILL NOT LEAD THEIR DELEGATIONS TO HAVANA. HE SEES REMOTE POSSIBILITY MOVEMENT AT BELGRADE MEETING TO CONDEMN CUBA AND TO CHANGE VENUE OF 1979 SUMMIT MEETING. HOW FAR SUCH A MOVEMENT WOULD GET WOULD DEPEND ON YUGOSLAVIA, WHICH IS LIKELY TO SQUELCH IT AS DEVISIVE. HOWEVER, IF BY CHANGE HAVANA MEETING CRUMBLES, IRAQ WILL HAVE PLACED ITSELF IN A POSITION TO PICK UP THE PIECES.
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